

# **MISSISSIPPI WIRELESS COMMUNICATION COMMISSION**

## **May 7, 2009 Meeting Minutes**

Place: MDOT Auditorium

### **Commission Members Present:**

<b>MS Department of Corrections</b>	<b>Chris Epps</b>
<b>MS Emergency Management Agency</b>	<b>Mike Womack</b>
<b>MS National Guard</b>	<b>Gary Ladd</b>
<b>MS Department of Environmental Quality</b>	<b>Keith Harkins</b>
<b>MS Department of Transportation</b>	<b>Willie Huff</b>
<b>MS Association of Fire Chiefs</b>	<b>Tom Lariviere</b>
<b>MS Office of Homeland Security</b>	<b>Jay Ledbetter</b>
<b>MS Department of Information Technology Services</b>	<b>David Litchliter</b>
<b>MS Department of Health</b>	<b>Mike Lucius</b>
<b>MS Department of Public Safety</b>	<b>Stephen Simpson</b>

### **No Advisory Members Present.**

Chairman Epps called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM and welcomed everyone.

Chairman Epps called for a motion to approve the minutes of the April meeting. Mike Lucius made the motion and it was seconded by Keith Harkins. The motion passed with none opposed.

Chairman Epps recognized Keith Harkins to report for the Procurement Review Committee. Mr. Harkins reported that no requests been received for review and subsequently he had no report.

Mr. Willie Huff reported for the Governance/Interoperability Committee. Several FEMA representatives who are here to assist the State of Mississippi in all areas of communications interoperability planning were in attendance. Using their expertise and guidance, state agencies are revisiting SCIP 2007 (State Communications Interoperability Plan 2007), determining gaps, and making changes and updates as needed. Chairman Epps welcomed the group and thanked them for the assistance they provide to the State of Mississippi.

Mr. Huff also recognized Chief Rayburn of the Capitol Police Department. He came to the Commission meeting today to express their interest in becoming a MSWIN user. They have tested devices on the network and found that they have coverage in areas where their current system is lacking. We will work with them to develop the necessary user agreement. Their radio devices will allow moving to MSWIN with just a software change.

Mr. Bill Roach spoke to the technical aspects of the Capitol Police Department change to MSWIN noting that the site on the Sillers Building which is currently connected out to the MEMA Master Site and the FEMA sites that are supplied down to the Coast will be reconfigured. Between now and the end of June as MSWIN moves north, the Sillers' site will be converted to MSWIN. At that point, a MOU will be executed and we will convert Capitol Police.

Mr. Huff made note of the fact that during the recent Hurricane Conference on the Coast, MEDCOM, which uses the MSWIN backbone and part of FEMA backbone right now, set up their display (trailer and tents for a full field hospital). The MSWIN banner was displayed by the radio system. MEDCOM is the University of Mississippi Medical Center's effort to provide timely

response and communications for community hospitals. From their trailer, they were able to talk to their helicopter around Kosciusko and to their dispatch center in Jackson. Without satellite, this is probably the first time something like this has been accomplished.

Chairman Epps recognized Mr. Roach to give the Commission a MSWIN Project Update. Mr. Roach reported the following.

There are 44 sites in Phase 1 – Southern Phase. Twenty-one (21) are currently in Wide Area Trunking; eight (8) are in Site Trunking; ten (10) towers are standing and; five (5) are under construction – two (2) at varying stages of tower construction and three (3) are in the foundation stage.
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There are fifty-two (52) sites in Phase 2 – Central Phase. There is a plan to construct a Mini Phase 2A which consists of twelve (12) sites and will provide connectivity into the capitol complex by hurricane season. Due diligence is underway in all of those sites; FAA, NEPA, and EPA are clear on all. They are all Motorola build sites and they are in the process or ordering the towers now.
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There are forty-seven (47) in Phase 3 – Northern Phase. All sites have been identified; due diligence has not commenced.
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Mr. Roach also updated the Commission on MSWIN Project funding. This month the Bond Commission approved a short term loan on the \$10M dollar bonds until the bonds are issued in the October time frame. Those funds have not been received yet but are expected by mid May per David Johnson of ITS. We received the first \$19.4M dollar MICG (FEMA) funding and the second \$19.4 has been applied for. During the 2009 Regular Legislative Session, the legislature approved an additional \$35M dollars in bond funding. These bonds are expected to be sold in the October/November time frame. An additional \$65M dollars is still needed to complete the MSWIN Project.

Mr. Huff questioned the number of build-to-suit and co-location towers that are a part of the Phase 2B build-out and asked if operations costs could be reduced if we had the funding and could build with no co-locations. Mr. Roach explained that those sites are about half Motorola build for the state and half co-locations which will be build-to-suit in that area.

He further explained that we have approximately one hundred sites to build (Phase 2 and 3) to the north of Phase 1. When the build-out is finished and the 2-year warranty period is complete, the ongoing operation costs of this system are going to be about \$12M dollars per year. About \$6M dollars is for tower lease costs. Therefore, the more towers the state owns, the less ongoing lease costs we will have. The Commission has approved the \$200 dollar subscriber fee but that will not cover the ongoing maintenance of MSWIN.

If we look to the legislature for funding to handle the ongoing maintenance of the system after the build-out, approval for \$6M dollars for ongoing expenses would be more likely than approval for \$12M dollars. In order to do that, about \$20M additional dollars above the initial project estimated cost of \$162M dollars is needed. If we had that kind of funding up front and could tell the build-to-suit vendor to build those sites for the state to own, then we would reduce ongoing tower lease cost by \$4 or \$5M dollars. Right now we don't have the funding to do that.

In the WCC's Build-to-Suit RFP, we asked for the option to purchase the towers during the first three years of the contractual term. The vendor charges some multiple (anywhere from 15 to 22 times the annual revenue) of their revenue stream from the tower as the purchase price. The longer we wait and the more tenants they get on the tower, the more it will cost to buy those towers back.

Mr. Huff noted that this information is beneficial, especially to those new members on the Commission to understand the decision that the Commission made several years ago to get the system up and running – that we would have to build some for the state and co-locate some

because we didn't have enough up front money to build-out all 140 some odd towers as state owned. Of course, the back side of that is that it increases the life cycle costs because we have to pay the leases on the towers.

Vice Chairman Womack asked if we have been approached to lease space on the towers that we own and if that is something we will be looking at pursuing aggressively at some point. Mr. Roach noted that we only own four at this time and have not advertised those. Mr. Buffington shared that typically on a state owned tower, there is not a lot of space. Commercial towers such as those Towers of Mississippi are building, are designed according to public safety specifications that we require for durability and the load we're going to put on them plus 100% growth in our loading. On top of that they build extra capacity into the tower to accommodate other tenants on the tower. When designing for the state, Motorola is designing for exactly our load plus 100% growth – no extra capacity.

Chairman Epps recognized Mr. Litchliter to provide a report on the monthly expenditures. He noted that \$7.9M dollars of Motorola invoices have been paid. We are continuing to get Motorola invoices and with the promise of the 2<sup>nd</sup> DHS grant and the 2<sup>nd</sup> \$10M dollars from bonds coming in soon, we will have enough funds to get through July and finish Phase 2A which means we will have the entire southern portion of the state connected to Jackson for the majority of the hurricane season. Monthly operation costs were about \$300K which is normal and we added a few more leased towers at about \$5K to \$6K each.

Chairman Epps opened discussion for other business. Willie Huff announced a press conference scheduled on May 18<sup>th</sup> to tout the pilot projects MSWIN has had in the counties (George, Stone, Pearl River, etc.) and to show off the success of 1A being completed. They are trying to tie the press conference close to Hurricane Awareness Week and get some good press. The time will be about 1:30 in the afternoon. Mr. Huff will email information on time and place as soon as it is finalized.

There is a scheduled Hurricane Evacuation press conference scheduled on May 26, 2009, at 3:00 PM in Picayune at the Mississippi Welcome Center.

Chairman Epps recognized Vice Chairman Womack who recognized former commission member, Joel Yelverton and his guest – Katie Allen, an upcoming Senior at Mississippi State University. She is a political science and communications major spending a few days shadowing at the Capitol and going to various commission meetings to see how things operate.

Mr. Roach announced a meeting with EOC/DHS personnel to update and refine the State of Mississippi Statewide Communication Interoperability Plan (SCIP) on May 19, 2009, 9AM – 4PM in the ITS 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room. Commission members are invited.

Commissioner Simpson asked if we are incurring maintenance expenses at this time with the operation of the 21 sites in Phase 1A. Bill Roach informed the commission that maintenance expenses will start with the formal acceptance of Phase 1, probably in the August/September time frame.

Vice Chairman Womack asked when we will purchase subscriber units and what we are gaining by having the system operational if we don't have radios to talk on. Bill Roach explained that in the contract, one third of the units are available for purchase at the end of each phase but that MSWIN does not intend to purchase any until we get demand requests from some of the agencies interested in starting use in Phase 1 and will use funds for infrastructure at this point. If any agency wants to come onto MSWIN, we can go ahead and order subscriber units. We have a cache of radios from FEMA that we can use today in the event of an emergency situation. Some funds are set aside in the PSIC Grant to increase the number of radios we have in the strategic reserve cache. We have a total of 675 units belonging to FEMA and estimate we can

purchase about 275 with PSIC funds. If the southern three districts of HP or MEMA are interested, we could go ahead and order radios from the Motorola contract.

Mr. Roach added that the Department of Marine Resources (DMR) will be converting to MSWIN and that we are integrating the six FEMA sites into the MSWIN system (a software change). DMR and Capitol Police will be the first two prime users on the system. Wildlife and Fisheries are looking at either re-bidding their satellite service with another re-seller group or coming on the State system. Mr. Bill Buffington is in conversation with Dr. Polles and there is some probability they will be coming on the system at some point also.

Mr. Litchlitter followed up as a point of clarification on Commissioner Simpson question about when system maintenance starts. We have two years of warranty before maintenance begins and warranty starts at Phase Acceptance.

Mr. Buffington shared that we actually have installed interim operational consoles at Troop J in Hattiesburg which are running on MSWIN and will be testing with pilot user groups soon.

Mr. Huff, for the purpose of clarification, noted that the vendor has allowed minimal use of the system for testing with DMR, pilot usage, and hurricane evacuation.

Mr. Roach shared that we are currently paying almost \$350 per site in monthly electric bills, tower rental leases amounting to almost \$200K per month, and ground rent lease charges for sites that are not co-locations. When 1A, 1B, and 1C are formally accepted, we can actually put users on MSWIN and the warranty period contractually begins. Motorola has agreed to let DMR migrate from the FEMA sites to MSWIN incorporating DMR and Capitol Police as pilot users before formal testing and acceptance of the system.

Chairman Epps recognized Frank Lalley from FEMA who clarified the reason that FEMA and the DHS/Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) are both addressing SCIPS. If the state has a shortfall in their communications network and wants grant monies, they will apply using the SCIP process, the OEC handles that and they have a 3-5 year time horizon. FEMA has a very short term time horizon. When a state asks FEMA to come, you ask them to come in and bring communications, supply assistance to state or local teams already working on evacuations, shelter, search and rescue, medical assistance, etc. Mr. Lalley's challenge is to go back and make sure federal responders coming into Mississippi in 2009, have the communication capabilities they need to interoperate with the teams already working on these missions. Mr. Lalley said he hopes that eventually the OEC, in their SCIP Grant process will cover not just the first responder requirements but also the communications requirements for all the missions that must be performed.

The monthly WCC meeting in July will be held on Thursday, July 2, 2009 at 1:30 PM.

The next meeting will be June 4, 2009, in the MDOT Auditorium at 1:30 PM.

Mr. David Litchlitter made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Keith Harkins seconded the motion. The motion passed with none opposed.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:20 PM.